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VISUALLY HANDICAPPED CHILDREN CAN BE INTEGRATED

IN REGULAR PHYSICAL EDUCATION CLASSES

by

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It is taken for granted that vigorous physical activity is very important to the health and well being of normally sighted children. Such activity, however, is even more important for children with very poor or no vision, because the average visually handicapped child lacks both motivation and opportunity for free varied movement.

Unlike the child with normal vision who runs errands, helps with chores, uses tools, handles game equipment, plays on the street, and participates in athletics, the visually handicapped child is forced to be sedentary, often idle, and isolated from the joys of bodily exercise inseparable from normal childhood. Yet he has the same physical need to use his body as does any other child.

As a result of this deprivation, many visually handicapped young people lack vitality and physical stamina, have poor posture, have feelings of inadequacy and dependency and develop frustrations. 2

Resnick Rose. "Recreation: A Gateway to the Seeing World", The New Outlook for the Blind, (November 1971), p.291.

²Ibid, p.292.

The author questioned more than a thousand visually handicapped children in his capacity as Physical Education Instructor at Camp Marcella.

Although some of his students had been successful in physical education in school, many others reported they were never included in games or given much of a chance to participate in physical activities.

Some of these children had not the slightest idea of how hockey, football, baseball, basketball and other sports are played. Nor did they even know how to swing a bat, or how one shoots an arrow, centers a football, passes a football, etc.

Many did not even know what a baseball mitt looked like, or a tennis racket, a soccer goal, a puck, etc.

Many felt very inferior because they could not be part of the group. "They weren't able to play".

THE ROLE OF THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

It is the responsibility of the school to contribute to the fullest possible development of the potentialities of each individual entrusted to its care. Today over 60 percent of legally blind youngsters are enrolled in public school programs. Almost all children with a mild visual difficulty are in regular school programs.

If the school does not provide an opportunity for these youngsters to learn physical skills, develop physical fitness, participate in games with a peer group, engage in competition and develop in a social-physical setting as other children do, how will these children obtain these benefits?

Unfortunately, two-thirds of the blind students in American public schools are not being provided with any physical education instruction or are receiving programs of little or no value. Depending on the severity of the visual problem, the physical education program of partially seeing children also tends to be lacking.

The New Jersey State Statutes provide that: "All students receive health, safety and physical education which shall be adapted to the ages and capabilities of the pupils".

(ARTICLE 2. PHYSICAL AND MILITARY TRAINING COURSES, N.J.S.A. 18A:35-5 and 18A:35-7.)

Nezol, James A. "Physical Education for Integrated Blind Students", Education of the Visually Handicapped, (March, 1972). p.16.

⁴Ibid, p.16.

Upon investigation it was found that the majority of New Jersey schools provided physical education for their visually handicapped children, but in most cases the children were excluded from most activities and were in reality part time performers. In some cases the performance was merely a token percentage of exercise time.

QUESTIONS OF PARTICIPATION

One of the most common reasons given for not offering more physical education activity to visually handicapped children is the fear of injury. Some administrators assume that visually handicapped youngsters are more prone to accidents. The public schools which have provided full participation have found that injuries are no more common or severe among visually handicapped youngsters than among the rest of the student body.

Mr. Vahram Kashmanian, Director of Education Services

New Jersey Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired,

states: "Our children have a much lower accident rate than

the rest of the student population".

Buell, Charles E. Physical Education for Blind Children. Springfield, 1966, p.45.

Another reason given for not including visually handicapped children in physical education is that it would require
more supervision. In almost every class the teacher can find
a sutdent who is willing and capable of being paired with the
'handicapped child', if needed. This usually is all the assistance required.

Most teachers feel they don't know what to do with a child who has a visual difficulty. The answer is to give the child an opportunity, if possible, to do whatever any other child does.

To come into a crowded locker room, fumble with a lock, rush to change into a gym suit, and race into the gym on time. To rush after class to struggle out of the gym suit, scramble into the showers and redress; make an out, score a point, hit it, miss it, hear a cheer for you, hear a groan for you, be part of a game, do a stunt, kick a ball, throw a ball, run, jump, yell, and do some of the thousands of little things that are done in a physical education class.

⁶Wienke, Phoebe. "Blind Children in an Integrated Physical Education Program," The New Outlook for the Blind, (March, 1966), p.18.

Some people in the teaching field actually think that persons with limited or no vision are so handicapped that they can't do most physical activities. This couldn't be further from the truth.

In the State of New Jersey there have been many partially and totally blind scholastic wrestlers, equestrians, water skiers, trackmen, gymnasts, bowlers, and even football players.

Charles E. Leonard, who is blind, has adapted sailing techniques for blind people and teaches the use of the audio-compass which he devised so people without vision can do their own navigation. 7

In 1971, a group of ten blind American students completed a course in scuba diving which was adapted by a Swedish organization for the blind.⁸

In 1972, at the Aspen Ski School, Colorado, 24 ski instructors participated in a blind skiing instruction clinic. Each instructor was blindfolded and taught by another instructor.

The purpose of the clinic was to prepare for the instruction of students from the Colorado School for the Blind to be invited to Aspen Ski School and Aspen Highlands Ski Resort.

⁷Leonard, Charles E. "Sailing Blind", <u>Yachting</u> (August, 1971) p.62.

Turner, Robert and Biblarz, Arthur. "Blind People Can do More Than Tread Water", Braille Monitor, (November, 1971),

Surely if these people can ski, scuba, bicycle, sail, ride horses or make it on a varsity team, others can fit into a physical education class.

The question of where to place a visually handicapped child is frequently asked. The answer depends on the child, the type of program and physical environment the school provides and the availability of adapted classes.

It is likely that a visually handicapped student with very poor mobility or absence of coordination or very low intelligence may gain more from adapted activities. An able visually handicapped child may benefit more from participation in the regular class.

One plan that has proved very successful on the secondary level is to place the "handicapped" student according to units on instruction. For example, the student might be placed in units on wrestling, weight training, tumbling, gymnastics and swimming, rather than softball, basketball, flag football or volleyball.

However, almost every game or activity can, with adaptations, provide an opportunity for the visually handicapped.

⁹Buell, p.46.

Some statements that are often made are: "This child is not as strong.... is not well coordinated.... does not have good physical skills.... is tired in only a few minutes of strenuous activity.... does not have the slightest idea of how the games are played."

Studies proved that visually handicapped youngsters are on the average sub par in some strengths, most skills, coordination, and stamina and lacked knowledge of game concepts.

However, if provided the opportunity to develop, they can progress and eventually perform on the same level with other children.

At the New Jersey Camp for Blind Children, visually handicapped children have performed every activity or modifications of every activity offered in regular physical education programs.

These activities that are easily accomplished by the children and special methods and suggestions that are stressed by Mr. Buell, Athletic Director, California School for the Blind, the Physical Education Staff at the Governor Morehead School (formerly, State School for the Blind and Deaf, North Carolina), and the instructors at the New Jersey Camp for Blind Children

¹⁰Buell, Charles E. Motor Performance of Visually Handicapped Children. Ann Arbor, 1950.

are being used to successfully integrate visually handicapped youngsters in regular physical education classes in New Jersey.

SUCCESSFUL ACTIVITIES FOR VISUALLY HANDICAPPED CHILDREN

Below is a compiled list of activities which require little or no modification and are usually successful for visually handicapped youngsters. 11

I. Procedures and Experiences for those with Abilities of a Very Low Level or the Very Young.

A. Knowledge of directions

- 1. Up, down.
- 2. Front, back.
- 3. Forward, backward.
- 4. Left side, right side.

B. Knowledge of the body

- 1. Head, neck.
- 2. Shoulder, arm.
- 3. Elbow, wrist.
- 4. Chest, waist, etc.

C. Walking

- 1. Alone--like elves, lions, etc.
- 2. With another person.
- 3. With a group.
- 4. By sound, touch, etc.

¹¹ Compiled from Buell, Physical Education for Blind Children, McCoy, Nancy et al. Physical Education for Visually Handicapped Children, and personal notes from eight years experience at Camp Marcella.

- D. Running
 - 1. Progression same as in C above.
- E. Jumping
 - 1. Up.
 - 2. Forward.
 - 3. Backward.
- F. Hopping
- G. Skipping
- H. Ball bouncing
- I. Rhythmic movements
- J. Stunts, mimetics
- K. Simple relays
- L. Musical games
 - 1. Hokey-Pokey.
 - 2. Ring around the roses.
 - 3. Farmer in the Dell.
- M. Imitation of self expression activities
 - 1. Pantomining simple stories with actions.
 - 2. Imitating farm animals.
- N. Use of balls and ropes
- O. Informal games
- P. Fundamentals of movement
 - 1. Climbing.
 - 2. Hopscotch.
 - 3. Hanging, etc.

II. Elementary Activities

- A. Story plays. An opportunity to show creative expression as well as to exercise the big muscles of the body.
 - 1. The Three Little Pigs, etc.
- B. Stunts
 - 1. Chinning.
 - 2. Hoola hooping.
 - 3. Skinning the cat.
- C. Simple gymnastics and other activities
 - 1. Leg swinging and balance.
 - 2. Bear walk, etc.
- D. Simple organized games
 - 1. Dodge ball (ball must bounce before hitting the visually handicapped youngster).
 - 2. Tag, using partners.
 - 3. Leap frog.
- E. Simple exercises
 - 1. Sit-ups.
 - 2. Touching toes, etc.
- F. Ball throwing with a big ball, using both hands.
- G. Running up and down hill.
 - 1. Running short races. (Use sound if needed.)
- H. Kick ball
 - 1. Placed on the ground.
 - 2. Held in hand,
- I. Modified softball.
- J. Rhythmic dancing

K. Easic motor skills

- 1. Running and walking at varied tempos.
- 2. Hopping on one foot, etc.
- 3. Climbing stairs, ladders, etc.

L. Simple tumbling

1. Forward, backward, roll, etc.

III. Middle Elementary Activities (grades four through six).

- A. Calistenics
- B. Track and Field
 - 1. Running (with sound or buddy if totally blind).
 - 2. Standing broad jump.
 - 3. Running broad jump.
 - 4. Distance throws, etc.
- C. Basketball skills.
- D. Modified softball.
 - 1. Place ball on tee.
 - 2. Use a volleyball for the handicapped student.
 - 3. Call to first base, then assist around bases.
 - 4. Roll the ball.

E. Modified kick ball

- 1. Visually handicapped child needs only to catch, touch, or stop the ball to make runner out.
- 2. Visually handicapped child may play only on the offensive, for both teams.
- 3. Don't pitch the ball, roll it slowly, or place it.
- F. Wrestling fundamentals.
- G. Relays.
- H. Tumbling and stunts.

- I. Swimming.
- J, Beginning bowling skills
 - 1. Without steps.
 - 2. With a guide rail.
- K. Dancing Folk and Square.
- L. Games
 - 1. Circle chase.
 - 2. Tag.
 - 3. Hot potato, etc.
 - 4. Parachute games.

IV: Activities for Junior High

- A. Physical fitness activities
 - 1. Calistenics (as the difficulty progresses, a student may have to assist the learning of correct movements).
 - 2. Apparatus (if explained well and precautions taken).
 - a. Horizontal bar.
 - b. Horse.
 - c. Parallel bars.
 - 3. Running
 - a. Sprints
 - b. Distances (use partner or nearby runner).
 - 4. Rope jumping.
- B. Gymnastics, stunts, and tumbling.
 - 1. Even dive rolls have been done with good spotting; if blind, sound can be used.
 - 2. Stunts with one or more partners.

Recreational games and activities C. 1. Relays a. Dribbling ball, b, Passing ball over and under. 2, Swimming 3: Bowling. Floor and miniature shuffleboard. 4. 5. Table tennis, Billiards. 6. Horseshoe pitching, 7. 8, Skating, Dancing (folk, square, and ballroom). 9. Voileyball (using modifications). 10. a partially seeing youngster can be allowed to catch and throw it, can do the serving. 2. 11. Newcomb. 12. Scooter games, races and stunts. Athletic games and team sports D. 1. Modified softball. 2. Touch football totally blind used as center and pass rusher, a, partially blind can also serve as a back. 3. Track and field Running events. a. b, Eight poind shot. c. Football throw (boys). Softball throw (girls). 4. Swimming Work toward Red Cross certificate. a. Diving. b. Rhythm swimming to music.

5. Basketball

- a. Regular full court for good partial vision.
- b. One on one.
- c. Foul shooting.
- 6. Bowling (ten pin and duck pin).
 - a. Standing,
 - b. Using approach (guide rail if needed).
- 7. Wrestling (full bout participation).
- E. Miscellaneous activities.
 - 1. Croquet.
 - 2. Archery.
 - 3. Golf.

V. Activities for High School.

- A. Physical fitness activities
 - 1. Calisthenics (as difficult as possible).
 - 2. Apparatus and special equipment activities.
 - a. The side horse.
 - b. Horizontal bars.
 - c. Parallel bars.
 - d. Rope climb.
 - 3. Running.
 - a. Include two-mile run.
 - 4. Rope jumping (advanced styles).
 - 5. Weight lifting.

- B. Gymmastics and stunts.
 - 1. Balances.
 - 2. Springs.
 - 3. Rolls.
 - 4. Individual stunts.
 - 5. Dual stunts.
 - 6. Cartwheels, etc.
- C. Recreational games and activities.
 - 1. Swimming.
 - a. All strokes.
 - b. Diving.
 - c. Life saving.
 - 2. Billiards.
 - 3. Bowling (inside and out).
 - 4. Table tennis.
 - 5. Shuffleboard (inside and out).
 - 6. Horseshoe pitching (inside and out).
 - 7. Skating (roller skating and ice skating).
 - 8. Dancing
 - a. Modern (girls).
 - b. Social dancing.
 - c. Folk and square dancing.
 - 9. Tug of war.
- D. Athletic games and team sports.
 - 1. Wrestling.
 - a. Conditioning.
 - b. Development of skills.
 - c. Scoring.
 - d. Bouts.
 - 2. Track and field.
 - a. Hop step and jump.
 - b. Twelve pound shot-put, discus (use caution and sound).

- c. High jump, partially seeing.
- d. Relays.
- e. Standing broad jump.
- f. Running broad jump, partially seeing.
- g. Dashes.
- h. Long distance runs.
- 3. Softball (with modifications).
- 4. Two-hand touch football (with modifications).
- 5. Basketball (with modifications).
- 6. Cage ball.

E. Miscellaneous

- 1. Cheerleading.
- 2. Marching.
- 3. Golf.
- 4. Archery.
- 5. Croquet.
- 6. Hiking.
- 7. Badminton (fundamentals).
- 8. Medicine ball.

SUCCESSFUL GAMES AND PROCEDURES FOR THE VISUALLY HANDICAPPED

Many physical education teachers have mentioned that due to conditions, such as large classes or lack of equipment, they are forced to mainly rely on group games.

There are a variety of ways to adapt rules, techniques and game procedures to aid a visually handicapped student.

Games should be selected with care to ensure participation on an equal basis. Games using line or chain formations, and activities that feature sound are good. A volunteer can assist a blind child and players can be asked to shout or clap hands to assist a blind child in locating them.

Dodge ball is an easy game to adapt. When a blind child is in the circle, he may pair up with another player or the ball can be bounced at him. When it is his turn to attempt to hit someone, the players in the circle can shout or clap hands.

In chain tag, the "It" tags a player and joins hands.

Together they run and the "It" continues to make tags until the entire group is in a chain or time is called.

Ball wrestle is another successful Camp Marcella game that can fit into a class.

Two or more players kneel around a basketball or volley-ball. When the signal Go is given, each player or team attempts to pull the ball away and one player must stand up with the ball at full arm's length overhead. Two or three minutes duration constitutes a draw. With eliminations the entire class has a chance to fight, rest, fight and rest.

Red Hot is a good game for young children. One or more balls are passed around a circle. One of them should be distinctly different if using several balls and is the Hot

is out of the game.

Numbers is another good game for young children. Any number of positions can be used. For example; one, means

stand up, two means sit down, three on your back, four on your stomach. The instructor or a student calls the numbers and the last one in position is eliminated.

Other games such as Spud, Snatch the Bacon, etc., can easily be successful if sound is used, if needed.

Games with close contact are usually successful, such as Bull in the Ring. ¹³ The players stand in a circle with hands grasped. One player, the Bull, must try to break out of the circle.

Team Bull in the Ring. The same as above but with two or more as a team who try to break out.

Hold the Fort. ¹⁴ A mat placed at one end of the gymnasium represents a fort. One team is designated "Defenders", the other, "Attackers". After two minutes of attacking, each attacher in the fort scores one point for his team. The teams then reverse positions and the game is repeated.

The variety of games that provide a chance for visually handicapped is enormous. All it takes is a teacher who is willing and able to search for new activities.

¹² Buell, Physical Education for Blind Children, pp.54-55.

¹³Ibid., p.110.

¹⁴ Ibid., p.114.

Novelty races and contests also provide an opportunity for integration.

Buell describes races with three players holding a broomstick, or four holding hands, or as in the rodeo race, the first player standing, the second player bending, holding the first man's waist and a third player on the second man's back.

In Camp Marcella, success has been achieved with train and chain races and three leg races, crab races, scooter races, two men in a sack races, and wheelbarrow races. All kinds of partner races can be successful and the variety of possibilities is endless.

It is difficult for students with extremely poor vision or absence of vision to comprehend instruction concerning rules, strategy, game concepts and game procedures.

Success has been achieved at Marcella and public schools using diagrams consisting of raised lines and forms (depicting playing areas and participants) which can be constructed by teachers or students with paper, string, cotton balls, spaghetti, etc.

¹⁵Ibid., p.124

SUCCESSFUL COMBATIVES FOR THE VISUALLY HANDICAPPED

Individual combatives also provide an equal opportunity for the visually handicapped. Below is a list of combatives that have been very successful at Camp Marcella.

- 1. Arm wrestle
- 2. Back to back lift
- 3. Back to back push
- 4. Back to back pull
- 5. Hand wrestle
- 6. Hand push
- 7. Indian wrestle
- 8. Leg tug of war
- 9. Neck pull
- 10. Push over
- 11. Stick turn
- 12. Stork wrestle
- 13. Tractor pull

 (Two players represent horses and are back to back. Two players are riders and reach back grasping wrists. Pull!)

ADDITIONAL SUGGESTIONS

A good teacher can devise relays that couple two or more students together, thus providing participation.

Sound can be used in any way as the instructor finds success. He may put a buzzer on the basketball rim or tap it with a rod, or create a noise under the backboard. He may stand behind the quarterback and call a rusher. In soccer drills the goalie may

may call a blind kicker; in volleyball a netman may call a blind server. The way sound is used is optional.

When possible, a volleyball may be substituted, for a visually handicapped student. What can be done with it? Play modified softball, tennis, handball, soccer, almost any game. For the partially sighted, a dark background with macadam, or grass is helpful.

In remedial work at Camp Marcella, such activities have proved to successfully improve eye-hand and eye-foot coordination. With a buddy it could work at school. With a class that will accept its use for a visually handicapped student, it could be a boon.

All kinds of modifications can be used in softball. A softball can be placed on a tee, tossed up and batted; or a volleyball can be pitched, rolled, bounced or placed.

The handicapped youngster may play offense for both sides, the entire class may use a volleyball, etc.

In football, the handicapped student may play center on offense and rusher on defense (no blocking), or he may be the kickoff man.

During passing drills, if he is called by the receivers, he could be a passer.

Wallball has been a very successful alternative activity for visually impaired students.

The visually handicapped student faces a wall at a distance of ten feet and throws a volleyball or basketball at the wall.

His opponent or opponents must catch the ball on the fly or one bounce. A miss or two bounces gives the handicapped student a point.

The ball should be thrown to one side only if there is one opponent, and it should be thrown hard, or low or high or at an angle to make the opponent miss. Should the wall be missed on the fly, (this happens in attempting low or wide throws), or should the ball strike the thrower, a point is awarded to the opponent.

The ball may be tossed underhand to the handicapped youngster (who holds his palms up if his handicap is severe), and
should the throw be in his hands and a miss occur, a point is
awarded to the opponent.

Should the handicapped youngster have enough useful vision to catch a bouncing ball, his opponent may throw the ball in an underhand motion against the wall and the handicapped youngster can have as many bounces as needed. A point is awarded to his opponent if he fails to stop the ball from passing him or touching a wall or line behind him.

CONCLUSION

As the visually handicapped youngster successfully takes part in physical activities, he begins to reflect new attitudes toward himself and others and motivated by group acceptance and the exhibaration of increased participation, he begins to acquire a more constructive self-evaluation and to achieve more satisfying relationships with others.

All it takes is a good teacher who will think and plan activities to provide a successful experience.

¹⁶ Resnick. p.296.

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ADDENDUM I

STATE OF NEW JERSEY
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
225 West State Street
Trenton, New Jersey 08625

MEMORANDUM

TO: PRESIDENT, SCHOOL BOARD, SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS,

ADMINISTRATIVE PRINCIPALS, BOARD SECRETARIES, DIRECTOR OF SPECIAL EDUCATION AND/OR PUPIL PERSONNEL SERVICES &

BUSINESS ADMINISTRATORS

FROM: DR. DANIEL RINGELHEIM, DEPUTY ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER

BRANCH OF SPECIAL EDUCATION & PUPIL PERSONNEL SERVICES

DATE: DECEMBER 15, 1972

RE: ANCILLARY SERVICES -

SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAM APPROVAL REQUIREMENTS 1973-74

The New Jersey State Constitution requires that all children receive a thorough and efficient program of education. To help local school districts provide such a program the State of New Jersey grants State Aid for every child, including the handicapped child, who is educated within a public school district. In addition to these general State Aid funds, programs for the handicapped are specifically supported at 50% of program costs.

Despite this major financial commitment by the state and local school districts, it is quite evident that the scope and quality of present day programs differ significantly from district to district across the State. This discrepancy has been noted by parents, school administrators and special educators concerned with providing appropriate educational programs for handicapped children. A major source of program difference has been the total lack of, or minimal provision of, ancillary services (i.e. Art, Music, Physical Education, Home Economics and Industrial Arts) to the handicapped when such services are provided other students in the same school district.

It is generally agreed that these services are of great benefit to children and more so for handicapped children. The State Aid provided the district outside of Chapter 46 (Beadleston Act) has been assumed to provide, specifically, for funding of these ancillary services. The lack of or minimal provision of such services to the handicapped raises questions regarding the school districts' use of these funds.

In order to provide the thorough and efficient programs required for handicapped children, to establish an equal educational opportunity for the handicapped, and to reduce the confusion in the question of providing ancillary services, the following special education program requirement should be considered for the 1973-74 school year.

All handicapped children, regardless of programs, will be provided the services of certified personnel in the areas of Art, Music, Physical Education, Home Economics, and Industrial Arts when such services are provided to other children in the school district. Children may be excluded from such services only upon release by the Basic Child Study Team of the district, for cause. As of the 1973-74 school year, no program in special education will be approved without the provision of ancillary services to all handicapped children.

It is required that boards of education plan to provide such services, where not presently provided, in their budgetary deliberation during 1972-73.

If there are any questions regarding this new requirement for special education program approval, please write or call Dr. Daniel Ringelheim, Deputy Assistant Commissioner, Branch of Special Education and Pupil Personnel Services, 225 West State Street, Trenton, New Jersey 08625 (telephone 609/292-7602).

DR/mlm

cc: County Superintendents of Schools

ADDENDUM II

INSERVICE PROGRAM FOR TEACHERS OF THE HANDICAPPED*

Project ACTIVE has been accorded high priority by the federal authorities and the N.J. State Dept. of Education because it focuses on meeting an existing teacher need - providing preservice and inservice training programs for physical education/recreation teachers who are in the process of, or desirous of, establishing individualized programs for all handicapped children.

In a memo to all county superintendents from Commissioner Marburger, it was stated that all school districts are required, by law, to provide a physical education program commensurate with the needs of the handicapped children in their schools. School districts and public or private agencies interested in more detailed information are requested to contact:

Dr. Thomas M. Vodola, Project Director Title III Teacher Training Program Ocean Township School Oakhurst, N.J. 07755

^{*}Newsletter Vol. 5 - No. 4
New Jersey League for the Hearing Handicapped, Inc.
January 1973